

**M.A. Thesis Proposal
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See Notes at end

Preface

In spring quarter 2000, during the visit of Professor Usopay Cadar in the Department of Ethnomusicology, I began my fieldwork on the UCLA campus. In addition to taking both his lecture class on Music of the Philippines and his performance course on Kulintang music, I conducted numerous interviews with him, accompanied Cadar at Filipino community events, interviewed the Filipino American students taking his courses, and documented his visit on video and audio. Two separate projects came out of this research: one analyzed the search by Filipino Americans in Los Angeles for Philippine cultural identity through kulintang music, and Usopay Cadar's teaching strategies which target those concerns. The other was an attempt to understand aspects of gender in Maranao society through musical analysis of two specific kulintang pieces, and a study of gender protocol in ensemble dynamics, supplemented by interviews with Cadar and bibliographic research. In my meetings with Helen Rees we strategized further fieldwork surrounding Filipino American musical activities in Los Angeles. From July 2000 until now I have established contact with leaders of various cultural and community organizations, volunteered at cultural events backstage in order to have access to the artists, and documented performers on video. I have also agreed to sit on a folk arts roundtable that will asset the state of Philippine folk arts in the United States, which is under consideration for funding by the NEH. However various ethical concerns arose surrounding issues of authenticity, and former difficulties with political and cultural controversies in New York City posed potential threat to my work here in California. (I would be happy to clarify this in person). Professor Rees has been very supportive in suggesting sensitive ways to deal with these problems, as well as in helping me find an alternative area of focus (Plan B) to consider. This alternative is my training in Southeast Asian studies in order to gain a broader perspective on the Philippines, and also in order to solidify a secondary area of expertise. Over the past ten months I consulted ^{with} Amy Catlin, and Barbara Gaerlan and Anthony Reid of the Center for Southeast Asian Studies regularly.

My exploration in Southeast Asian history has led to my current focus on gender through history in the Muslim regions of Southern Philippines. Supplemented by my study of the Arabic language and consequent exposure ^{to} aspects of Islam, I find this historiographic approach incredibly enlightening. My work for Anthony Reid's graduate history seminar explores the impact of Islam in

Southern Philippines on women's roles in the home and in society, with a comparison to Malaysia. I hope to apply my discoveries to my preliminary work on gender and kulintang.

Introduction

Before the 1960's, kulintang performance in the Muslim areas of the Philippines was considered a female domain. However, kulintang as studied and performed in the Philippines and United States today does not appear to emphasize this fact. Popular perception of the instrument in Filipino American and non-Muslim Philippine society tends to associate kulintang with "tribal" roots and pre-colonial ancestors that resisted Spanish domination – quite the antithesis of female domestic activities. I first studied kulintang in 1992 and only learned of its feminine aspects eight years later during my fieldwork with Cadar. Today both men and women study and experiment with kulintang music at both university and mainstream levels. This apparent dissociation of kulintang from its "traditional" gender roles in performance practice over the last 40 years remains for the most part unexplained and undocumented.

Literature/ Lacunae

In their seminal articles on kulintang, Usopay Cadar and Danongan Kalanduyan describe their respective Maranao and Maguindanao kulintang traditions in terms of organological classification, musical structure, and ^{functions} kulintang music in society. In the Philippines, Jose Maceda pioneered ethnomusicological data collection, and together with Robert Garfias, filmed rare footage of kulintang performances and dances in areas that are inaccessible today. Other scholars such as Ricardo Trimillos, Yoshitaka Terada, Karen Posner, and Scott Scholz focused their dissertations on specific aspects of kulintang music. Versions of their dissertations were published in an volume of *Asian Music* in 1996, but since then scholarly interest has waned. Most of their work emphasizes musical genre and technique, leaving social analysis to the Maranao and Maguindanao natives, Cadar and Kalanduyan. My active contemporaries in the field include other at least two other graduate students, Mary Talusan and Pamela Costes (U. of Washington) who also examine gender in kulintang performance. However, based on the existing canonical literature, it is difficult to extract a gender narrative much deeper than that of a Muslim Filipino woman negotiating between socially sanctioned behavior and opportunities for subtle expression seized during kulintang performance (Cadar, 1996).

Aside from the work of Cadar and Kalanduyan, the existing literature on gender in Southern Philippine society in particular is commonly written by non-Muslim scholars dependent upon local literary sources often penned by the intellectual elite, sources whose status often requires adherence to more pious ideals. Non-muslim Filipinos and foreign scholars tend to collapse Islamic code with

Moro culture, perpetuating a static representation of Moro social relations. The relationship between ideal Muslim society and actual folk practice fluctuates constantly in response to internal and external pressures. Therefore I feel that a lack of understanding of the actual, on-the-ground, role of Muslim women in the Philippines has limited our approach to gender in kulintang performance. I aim to bring in new interdisciplinary sources from Southeast Asian pre-modern and modern history, religious studies, and comparative Southeast Asian anthropology into this emerging and promising discourse.

Of course more fieldwork must be done in the Southern Philippines in order to fully engage this topic. What is the status of female kulintang musicians in Moro society today, and how has that changed since Cadar and Kalanduyan's observations in the 1960's and 1970's? How do women musicians articulate their experiences and their identities? How do local musicians feel about mainstream Philippine and Filipino American appropriations of kulintang, and how do these interpretations differ from or influence local usages? Unfortunately current political conditions and armed clashes between Moro militant groups and the Philippine government, exacerbated by increased kidnapping of foreigners, makes fieldwork inadvisable for American scholars at the present time. Until Philippine fieldwork is possible, I focus on a critical re-reading of existing literature, historical research, and my fieldwork in the United States.

Content

PART I. GENDER & ISLAM IN PHILIPPINE HISTORY

There is evidence to support that pre-Islamic Philippine society, like much of archipelagic Southeast Asia, attributed a relatively high status to women in society. Gender roles were indeed challenged by the introduction of Islam, but the retention of indigenous practices in Folk Islam versus orthodox ideals kept actual gender roles in flux. Yet historical stereotypes of the oppressed Muslim woman informs the dominant view of the highly restrained Moro woman who can only express her subaltern voices in subtle ways. This perspective is based upon a oversimplified view of Islam in Southeast Asia. Contrary to the superficial impression that Islam = oppression of women, comparative studies in gender and Islam in Southeast Asia reveal a dynamic history fraught with tension between pre-Islamic society and imported religious doctrine. The emergence of a Pan-Moro movement in the 1960's against a Marcos-led Philippine nationalism used orthodox Islam as its unifying ideology. This Islamic resurgence did affect social expectations of women, but this effect differed across social class, age, education, and urban/rural dwelling. While many Islamic codes valued modesty, restraint, and submission to men, actual behavior of women ranged from dutiful

compliance to revolutionary comradeship. More women donned Arab-style dress and the veil, but some women chose to wear the veil as a symbol of resistance to the Philippine government. In fact, at the height of its growth the Islamic front also trained a female militia for combat.

Gender in kulintang in Southern Philippine society

On the other hand, kulintang is more prevalent in areas where patriarchal traditions dominate. Therefore existing literature on gender in kulintang through the 1970's tends to emphasize the formality of performance protocol dictated by social restraints placed upon women. Gender segregation grants little opportunity for daily interaction between younger men and women, so kulintang performance allows for musical interaction and courtship in a socially sanctioned setting. Mastery of the stylized performance technique in formal kulintang performance demonstrates one's feminine grace and propriety. However I found that musical analysis of certain kulintang songs reveal moments of musical expression that are not as subtle or restrained. I venture to put forth a model of more empowered female musician who claims a disproportionate amount of control over the entire ensemble's musical style and execution in the course of a performance. She can "announce" dramatic emotions, criticize, and even mock certain male individuals through musical improvisation. Usopay Cadar cites such "feminist" aspects of musical performance as largely unexplored territory.

explore
model of
the harangue

PART II. THE "BRONZE AGE" OF ETHNOMUSICOLOGY

Contemporary social theories in this global age call for a more complex approach to the local versus global dichotomy. Especially in post-colonial theory, spheres of influence are reciprocal; local and global arenas act upon and effectively change each other. In the latest journal, *Ethnomusicology*, Ki Mantle Hood opens with the assertion:

"A Gamelan orchestra was first used in 1954 to help university students discover the unique culture of another people. The gamelan was from Java, Indonesia. The University was UCLA. Subsequently, similar ensembles came from many parts of Southeast Asia and the Philippines to serve universities world-wide as primary resources in the field of ethnomusicology. That period of 46 years I have titled "Ethnomusicology's Bronze Age" (365)."

Male domination in media
corporate world
Islamic revival? 60's + 70's

Kulintang and Gender: Local Transformations

The import of kulintang instruments and teachers from the Southern Philippines was a strategy meant to change the American ethnomusicologist. Yet I propose that ethnomusicology's "Bronze Age" in turn transformed local perception of the role of kulintang in Southern Philippine society.

- More men began to play kulintang professionally
- Regional (male) competitions flourished
- Newer styles popularized faster & more aggressive renderings

Transnational Transformations

As ethnomusicology's "Bronze Age" mentality infiltrates American mainstream culture, which representation of kulintang do its contemporary non-Muslim (Filipino, American, Filipino-American) practitioners embrace? How have these new interpretations misread, reinterpreted, or ignored kulintang's female aspects? I explore three phenomena to trace the distancing of kulintang from its feminine roots:

1) The dominant association of percussion with masculinity in the United States

- a brief cross-cultural exposé

2) The rise of the male guru and neuter "kulintang master"

- case studies of Cadar, Kalanduyan, Eleanor Academia, and Zonia Velasco, Gaudiosa

US individualism, commodification

3) Kulintang as a symbol of "pure" pre-colonial heritage, and by extension, as a symbol of anti-colonial revolution

- drawing upon research of New York and Los Angeles Filipino American cultural expression, and contemporary Philippine artists who use kulintang.

See Nat'l Geographic / Kulintang / Martial Arts Resources - ref.
Eskrima digest - kulintang women
- Kali legend Vila Briae - taught by blind princes of Samar
See Journal of Phil. Studies - changes in marriage customs Academy in Marikina
(within last 5 years) for Moros
- Kevin Beath Kevin_birth@gc.edu (queens college - psych anthrop)
Male guru - martial arts - fear that whites will take it over
- patronizing toward female students
- female "Guros" revered even more
5 Dan Inosanto

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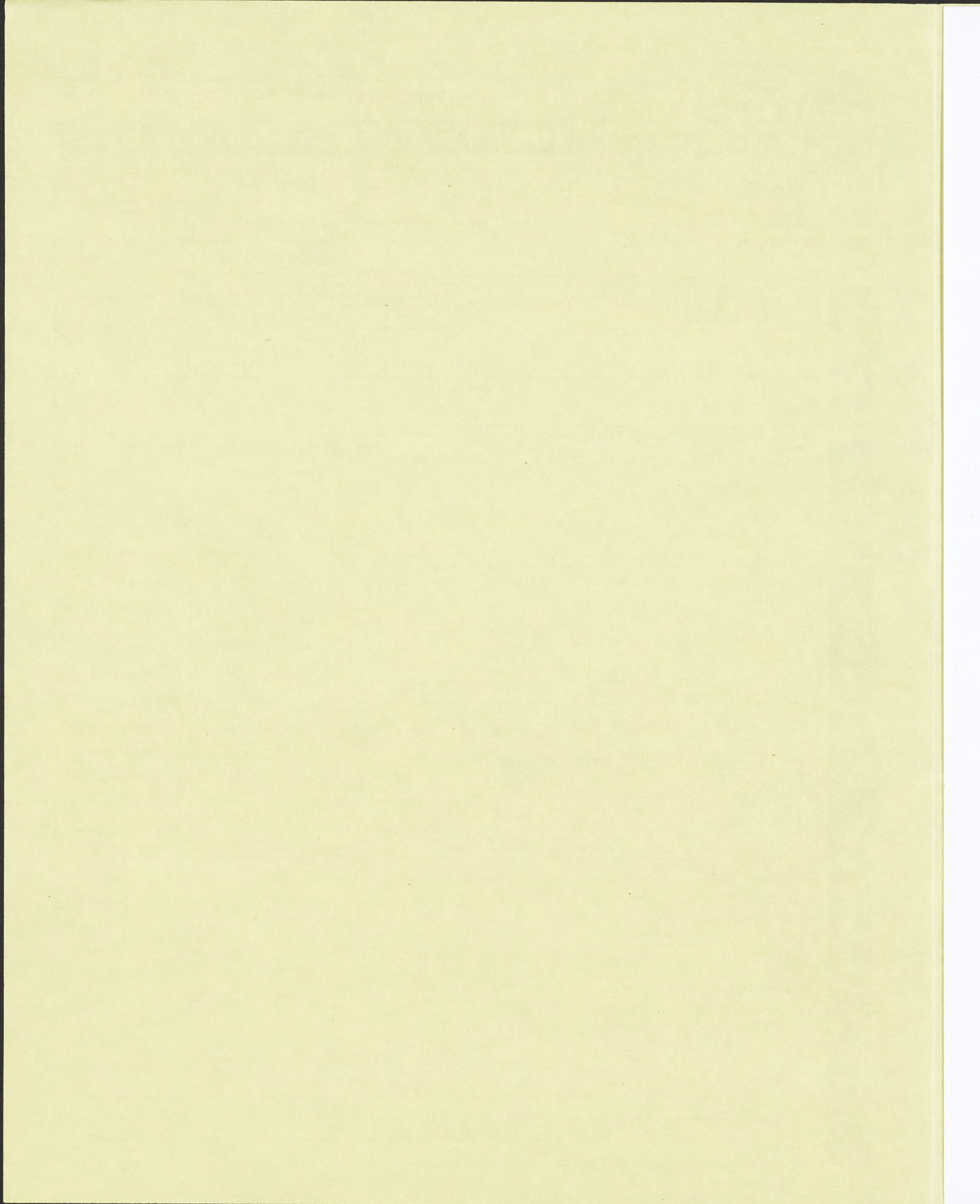
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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Filipino Girls, Gurus, and Women Warriors:
Kulintang Music's Transnational Transformations

A paper submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the
MA degree in Ethnomusicology

by

Eleanor T. Lipat

2001

Filipino Girls, Gurus, and Women Warriors: Kulintang Music's Transnational Transformations

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Introduction

The story of the kulintang's journey from southern Philippines to the United States is a dramatic one involving romance, youthful ideals, and political upheaval. The kulintang itself is merely a musical instrument, but the musicians who play it, the dancers who respond to it, and the directors who stage it are all caught up in transnational webs of social forces from Islamic tradition to post-colonial militant feminism. The most rapid rate of sociopolitical change surrounding kulintang performance began in the early 1960s, and currently shows no signs of slowing down. By embarking upon an analysis of kulintang musical structure, performance practice, and symbolic meaning, I hope to contribute to the emerging body of writings relating post-colonial theory, transnational identity, urban social movements, and feminism in diasporic expressive arts. I discuss these processes in five major sections:

- I. Kulintang and Gender in Maranao Society
- II. Kulintang and Male Modernity: The Rise of the Kulintang Celebrity and Guru
- III. Transnational Social Movements and The Filipino-American Search for Roots
- IV. Post-colonial Women Warriors: Four Female Artistic Directors in the United States
- V. Criticisms and Discussion

The first section examines traditional femininity in kulintang performance, analyzing women's musical strategies in three traditional Maranao kulintang pieces; the second traces the 1960s rise of the male musician/scholar, and the subsequent export of kulintang music out of the Muslim regions; the third identifies major societal developments leading up to the 1986 People Power Revolution, and assesses the impact of those transnational events on Filipino-American re-interpretations of kulintang's meaning; the fourth focuses on new feminist interpretations of kulintang arts by four female artistic directors in the United States; and the fifth discusses some of the problematic aspects of kulintang performance today, raising some thoughts for the future.

I. Kulintang and Gender in Maranao Society

Kulintang is a gong and drum music tradition from the southernmost islands of the Philippines, particularly the islands of Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago (Figure 1). It is played primarily among the fourteen Muslim ethnic minorities, whose estimated population is less than 10% of about 81 million inhabitants of the predominantly Roman

Catholic country.¹ Of those groups, the Maranao, Maguindanao, and Tausug are the largest. Language dialect, dress, and other aspects of local culture vary greatly from region to region. Kulintang instrumentation, performance style, musical style and repertoire also vary. However some larger social concerns, such as the relationship of religion and culture, the struggle for political autonomy from the Philippine national government, and the effects of foreign influences, unite the different ethnic groups.

Figure 1: Map of the Philippines



The Maranao kulintang² ensemble includes the *kulintang* – the main melodic instrument comprised of eight small knobbed gongs laid horizontally across a long wooden stand; two *agong* – larger and lower-pitched vertical hanging gongs that provide the rhythmic foundation; the *babandir*, a shallow, high-pitched gong that functions as a timekeeper; and the *dabakan* – a skin-head wooden drum played with long, thin rattan sticks (see Figure 2). The kulintang plays the main melody of the composition, while the large and small agong, babandir, and dabakan provide interlocking rhythmic accompaniment (Cadar 1975:53).

¹ Population figures from Madale's study (2000) on the struggle for Muslim autonomy in Mindanao, p.1.

² The Maranao spelling of the term is *kolintang*; however, mainstream Philippine and American audiences have become more familiar with the Maguindanao spelling, *kulintang*.

Figure 2: UCLA Kulintang Ensemble June 1, 2000: (left to right) Eduardo Contreras and Peter DeGuzman on low and high agong, Aron Hochhauser on babandir, Eleanor Lipat on kulintang, James Macion on dabakan.



Logistically speaking, the instruments of the kulintang ensemble are not easy to obtain nor to transport. Comprising heavy knobbed brass gongs and carved wooden stands, the instruments are only produced by artisans in the Muslim regions of the Southern Philippines, regions considered highly dangerous due to perpetual political instability. Recalling his ethnomusicological fieldwork in the 1960s, Usopay Cadar writes, “there was great personal risk involved in criss-crossing a war zone and chasing war-disconcerted singers and informants, while carrying field equipment that might have been easily mistaken for combat paraphernalia” (Cadar 1980:7). Aside from economic investment, it also takes a considerable amount of vision and determination to obtain the physical instruments and the musical knowledge to play them. Such challenges imbue the kulintang with high symbolic value, and this consequent slowed pace of migration across geographic and cultural space allows us to trace its path to better understand its sociocultural impact. In her writings on transnationality in Southeast Asia, Aihwa Ong reminds us that the dispersal of a single cultural form does not bring about “a global cultural uniformity; rather, these products have...the effect of greatly increasing cultural diversity because of the ways in which they are interpreted and the way they acquire new meanings in local reception” (Ong 1999:10). Out of its local setting the kulintang takes on new symbolic associations that are quite different from those of its traditional contexts. What are those adopted meanings, and which societal mechanisms enable such associations?

Certain cultural forms (e.g. material objects, dance, and music) are also assigned gender characteristics such as masculine, feminine, neutral, or imbued with both feminine and masculine elements. These gender associations in turn shape social interaction among participants during a performance, and the music itself. Although concepts of gender are far from homogenous within a culture, ethnomusicologist Ricardo Trimillos’ study of over 500 song texts published by lowland Filipino authors over 89 years provides a helpful entrée into the analysis of gender in Philippine

music. He identifies two principal perceptions of Filipino women as portrayed in these songs. The first is a “structural, model image: the Filipino woman as helpmate to be admired from afar,” and the second a “functional dynamic image: the Filipino woman as steward of power and controller of social interaction” (Trimillos 2000:1). The first image is one that embodies passive, feminine composure; and the second allows for female dominance over a situation, or feminist action. Though the feminine versus the feminist seems a familiar dichotomy, when dealing with gender issues in the Philippine context, a patriarchal model presupposed by western feminist theory falls short of the mark. Instead, a bilateral model for negotiating gendered ambiguities more appropriately allows for contradictions in a society that historically attributes specific domains of power to both sexes.³ In seizing control over a male domain, a woman may not necessarily intend it as a counter-hegemonic act – it may actually be considered a “manifestation of pre-defined cultural forms” from history which, “though ideologically conflicting, may...jointly construct a formula for woman’s power in society” (Karim 1992:113). Trimillos concludes that both the beautiful helpmate and the steward of power, seemingly paradoxical images, in fact coexist as available strategies for one to maneuver a female identity that is “context-determined” (Trimillos 2001:7). The geo-cultural flow of the kulintang is likewise marked by fascinating shifts in its gender associations and its perceived potency. These shifts can only be understood by analyzing negotiations between both male and female interpretations along the way.⁴

Much of my knowledge of Maranao kulintang performance protocol was imparted by Dr. Usopay Cadar during his visit to the UCLA Ethnomusicology Department in spring 2000. Most published kulintang articles were written by Cadar, informed by his upbringing within Maranao musical traditions and by ethnomusicological fieldwork done in the 1960s and 1970s. Cadar and Maguindanao kulintang musician Danongan Kalanduyan (1996) offer their perspectives as “native” scholars. Other scholars deal more with description of repertoire, organological classification, and musical analysis, leaving most of the social contextualization to Cadar and Kalanduyan.⁵ Cadar, especially, has written many eloquent articles about the role of kulintang in Maranao society, including brief

³ For more in-depth descriptions of male and female bilaterality in pre-modern Southeast Asian history, see Reid (1988) and Andaya (1994).

⁴ Ong and Peletz (1995) call for a more balanced treatment of male and female gender experiences in order understand more fully the ambiguities of modern bilateral gender dynamics in Southeast Asia.

⁵ See *Asian Music* 27:2 (1996) for kulintang articles by Cadar, Kalanduyan, Yoshitaka Terada, Scott Scholz, Karen Posner, Steven Otto, and Robert Garfias.

discussions of gender roles. However, he also acknowledges a lacuna in kulintang scholarship concerning gender, and what he calls the “female art of performance” (Cadar 2000b).⁶

Kulintang music is performed for entertainment and ritual in both formal and informal settings. Its traditional context is in the home, at a social gathering called by the family who owns the instruments, but in recent times, it is heard at more outdoor festivals. Occasions range from marriage and entertainment to self-amusement and emotional expression. It is taught informally through oral tradition. A kulintang gathering is practically a free-for-all, wherein anyone present is welcome to play one of the instruments. However, social dynamics are certainly guided by unspoken rules privileging generational status, talent, marriageability, and other hierarchical relationships. In traditional Maranao society kulintang is considered “essentially a woman’s instrument” (Cadar 1996b:88). It requires “a kind of grace and frailty that is normally associated with women,” since “men are considered too virile, too aggressive, and too stiff to be able to play the melodic part” (Cadar 1975:54-55). Cadar grew up learning kulintang primarily from his mother, aunt, and sisters (Cadar 2000c). He explains that during a formal kulintang performance the female musician must display extra-musical talents as well. She employs a graceful, swaying walking style when approaching the instrument; or may dance toward the instrument while manipulating her *malong* tubular cloth, fan, or scarf. She seats herself in a proud bodily stance and “delivers her oratory and poem exalting the occasion, the important people present, the ensemble, and the individual parts and players,” singing her expectation that they will play “harmoniously” (Cadar 1975:58). Her “sympathetic eyes and curled eyelashes”⁷ are generally downcast in modest repose but may be used in the course of performance artfully to cast meaningful glances or to articulate ironic moments by making her eyebrows “dance” (Cadar 1985:40). The female player uses long, decorated sticks of soft wood to play her instrument. The length and weight of the beaters privilege melodic integrity over rhythmic speed, thus upholding a stately, feminine musical aesthetic that is uniquely Maranao. During one of my lessons, Cadar decided that I was ready to learn the art of flirtation. He stopped my playing and advised:

This is the point...where you want to look at the audience. You might want to smile with your eyes...kind of steal some quick glancing. Because actually it’s not true when someone says, “oh the

⁶ See also Maceda (1998), p. 38 for a description of Maranao female elegance and virtuosity on the kulintang.

⁷ One physical quality listed among the “seven fundamental features” of Maranao beauty as described in the Maranao *Darangen* epic. The others emphasize hair, physique, walk, coy behavior, and a proud stance (Calsado 1995:58-59).

Moro,⁸ they never smile.” It’s just our smiles are subtle. You do it with your eyes, and they rarely will show their teeth. But they’ll smile with their eyes and with their faces... just little pointers that will make you, bit by bit, more Maranao. (Cadar 2000b)

This feminine art of performance has been dismissed by some scholars as a formalized display of modesty that only permits tempered expression within Islamic convention. I argue that although she may appear passive and composed in demeanor (as expected of a beautiful helpmate), the range of musical expression within her grasp gives her an advantageous position within the ensemble. Her “functional, dynamic” palette of feminist strategies is located within the music itself. Since the woman plays the main melodic instrument, she tends to wield a disproportionate amount of control over certain musical aspects. For example, while the program order of a formal Maranao concert does follow a general sequence (old style genres followed by new, then “other” genres), the kulintang player sizes up the audience and selects the specific composition. Until she begins playing, her accompanying musicians may or may not know exactly which piece she has in mind.

Let us also examine the *ka-anon*, or the pre-performance process in which the musicians “tune” their instruments and prepare to play. The kulintang player does not “tune” the gong pitch in the western sense, but checks the order of the gongs to make sure that they have not been re-arranged by the player before her. Also, brass and bronze are malleable materials – a gong may lose its resonance, producing a “flat” tone that would require some mild repair to bring it back to sonorous life. In the *ka-anon*, first the kulintang player walks slowly and gracefully to her instrument. Once seated, she takes her time checking the gongs by playing a formulaic tuning melody. Then she signals the dabakan player to “tune” his drum, then the agong players to test their gongs. Lastly, the babandir player taps at the rim of the instrument. Meanwhile, she adjusts the folds of her *malong* skirt and eases into a comfortable and poised playing position. She signals the drummer to begin the piece, then for the agong and babandir to join in one by one. Once she is satisfied that the accompanying parts have locked into each other, she strikes repeated notes on the primary tonic (gong 3) to re-set the ensemble to her preferred tempo. Only after the elaborate *ka-anon* process does she begin the body of the first melody. If the kulintang player begins at a slower pace, forcing the dabakan player to

⁸ The term “Moro” was first coined by Spanish colonizers who used it to refer to Muslim Filipinos in a derogatory manner. In the 1960s Muslim Filipinos themselves co-opted the term, transforming its negative valence into a symbol of pride and anti-colonial defiance.

adjust his speed, the drummer suffers the humiliation of a musical reprimand. Cadar tells cautionary tales to his students about dabakan players who jump into the piece at too fast a tempo. The accompanists must be vigilant at all times and respond with the proper social and musical decorum, lest they be denied the potential romantic benefits. Cadar continues, "No wonder the Maranao *kolintang* player is ideally a women, for many couples in Lanao have started their romantic past with an exciting exchange of *kolintang* and drum passages!" (Cadar 1996b:97).

A young girl from a privileged family is trained in many artistic and literary forms. By displaying her musical talent she reaps symbolic wealth and honor for her kin, and also for securing the future of well-bred progeny (c.f. Bourdieu 1994). Therefore, a kulintang performance often doubles as a public arena for matchmaking. If more than one man has his eye on a particular female kulintang player, then the chance to maneuver courtship conditions in one's favor comes about as a competitive musical performance opportunity. However, through deeper musical analysis I look beyond the "feminine" aspects of performance practice to more "feminist" strategies of negotiation of gender roles within the music itself.

I analyze three Maranao kulintang pieces, *Kanditagaonan*, *Kapribogar*, and *Kasulampid*, in order to demonstrate more clearly the connection between music and female expression. *Kanditagaonan* is a popular song that can be considered either a children's game song or an adult love song, depending upon the lyrics chosen. It is a dialogic song between two young friends or two suffering lovers, one of them named Ditagaonan. In Figure 3 are two versions of the lyrics sung by Usopay Cadar, with his English translation (CD Track 1):

Figure 3: Kanditagaonan (Sung)/CD Track 1

VERSION I- Children	
Adao Ditagaonan	My (friend) Ditagaonan
Na mamola ta sa obi	Let us sow some sweet
Na gaon'n ta bo amay	potatoes
Na itinda ta mapita	Then harvest them later
A k'n o madak'l a tao	And then cook them tomorrow
	To feed the masses
VERSION 2- Children/(Grown-ups)	
Adao Ditagaonan	Oh, my Ditagaonan
Na o ba ngka bo gaoni	Ah! Uproot (destroy) not
So Kiyangginawa-i ta	Our friendship (love)
Ka adi-adi so kalab	Or else being dead is better
A di so kadowa ngaram	Than living stigmatized

Often teachers use an instrumental adaptation of *Kanditagaonan* on the kulintang as a beginner piece that employs basic techniques of repetition and combination of simple melodic patterns. Kulintang compositions of this type

consist of a cache of short melodic patterns that the performer draws upon. Cadar and Robert Garfias (1974) categorize these patterns as the main motive, its variation, its restatement at higher positions, a second motive, transitional figures, and a cadential pattern. Pattern combinations may vary depending upon the length of the song, but the implied song melody determines the overall structure of improvisation. Since the tuning of each kulintang set may vary, I provide transcriptions of the basic patterns in cipher notation. The numbers in Figure 4 correspond to gongs 1-8; gong 1 being the lowest, and gong 8 the highest. The first five gongs are in an approximate pentatonic scale, gongs 6-7 and approximate half step, and gongs 7-8 and approximate whole step.

Figure 4: Eight Gongs of the Kulintang Main Melody Instrument (based on Otto 1996:126)

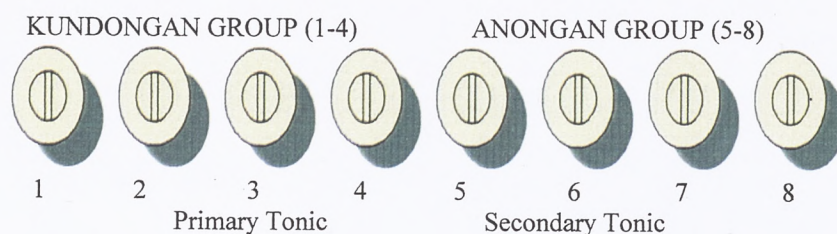
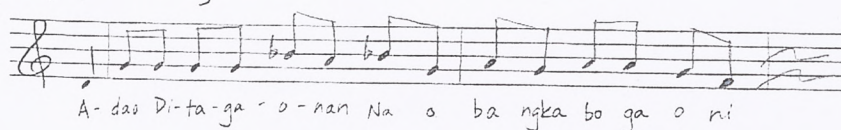


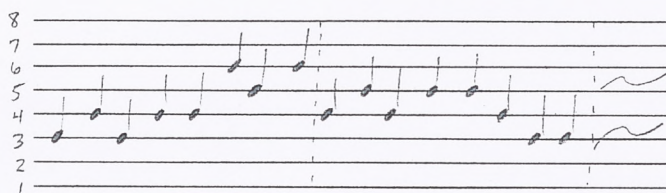
Figure 4 illustrates the 8 melody gongs, with gong 3 as the primary tonal center, and gong 6 as the secondary tonal center. Gongs 1-4 are called the *Kundongan* group and gongs 5-8 comprise the *Anongan* group. In Musical Example 1, I provide the sung version of *Kanditaganonan*, and juxtapose it with its instrumental version in graphed cipher notation. This way, one can compare the melodic contours of the sung and instrumental melodies.

Musical Example 1: Kanditaganonan Melodic Contour

a) Sung melody



b) Played on the kulintang



Improvisation and variation are central to kulintang performance. Once I memorized the basic patterns, Cadar expected me to re-combine and extend the basic patterns (Musical Example 2).

Musical Example 2: Kanditagaonan Basic Patterns (Instrumental)

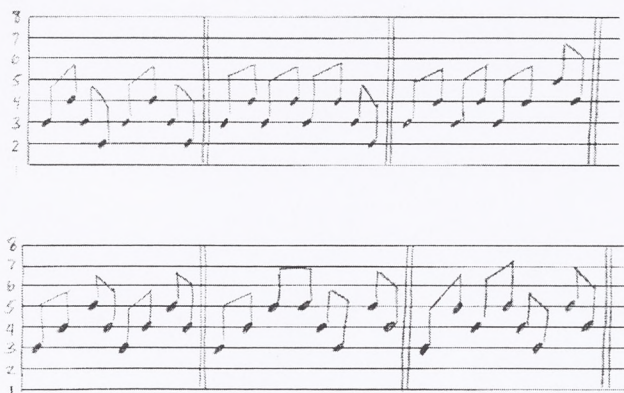
Pattern Ia (main pattern):	3434	4656	4545	543		
Pattern Ib (variation):	3444	4656	4545	543		
Pattern II a (higher restatement):	3666	6765	4545	543		
Pattern II b (higher extension):	3666	6765	4545	6765	4545	543
Pattern II c (even longer extension)	3666	6765	4545	6765	4545	
	6765	4545	543			
Pattern III (second motive):	3456	7656	4545	543		
Transition a:	3545	543				
Transition b:	3555	543				
Final cadential pattern:	3456	6666	7654	543		

However, in my own rendering I wondered how a Maranao player would improvise. Cadar explained that Kanditagaonan is a dialogic piece that captures conversation between two friends or lovers. It is shaped according to expressive inflections of the Maranao language. The lower gongs of the Kundongan group, with gong 3 as its tonic, represent a sort of male or lower voice; while the higher Anonan group, with gong 6 as its tonic, mimics a female voice. He advised me to imagine the natural flow of the conversation (or argument), and to structure my improvisation according to that imaginary scene. It is my hope that understanding the emotional contours of the text will lend my performance a musical character that a Maranao listener can identify with (CD Track 2). By referencing and manipulating song lyrics according to gendered gong registers, the female kulintang player can express and melodically expand emotions, while communicating messages to the audience.

The song title of the second piece, Kapribogar, is derived from the verb *bogo*, which implies stirring up trouble. This piece is unique because before playing, the kulintang soloist switches gongs 3 and 4, placing the scalar tones out of ascending order. Interchanging the gongs creates a melodic mode that is not normal – it becomes “paranormal.” Therefore Kapribogar’s comical nickname is the “Twilight Zone” (Cadar 2000b). The origins of the song are attributed to a story of four males “fighting to play the *Agong* for a beautiful *Kolintang* player” (Cadar and Garfias 1996:119). After the chaos she expresses her feelings of discontent through the kulintang. In the Maranao old style (Andung) repertoire there is a body of similar pieces based on the recurring theme of discontent resulting from quarreling. When describing the particular ethos of Kapribogar, Cadar paints a picture of a still body of water that is stirred into stormy turmoil, symbolic of the woman’s unsettled emotions. The patterns derive from a basic melodic

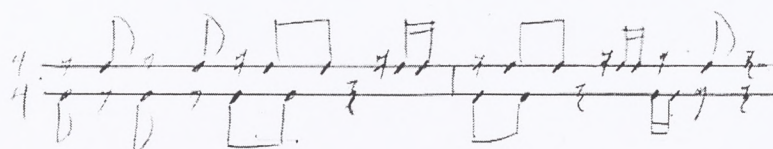
figure that utilizes a narrow range of three adjacent gongs in repeating eighth note patterns (Musical Example 3, CD Track 3).

Musical Example 3: Six Pattern Variations in the First Section of Kapribogar/CD Track 3



As I mentioned earlier, the two agong players' interlocking parts create one musical phrase. Garfias adds, "In performance both players exhibit a spirit of friendly rivalry, trying to improvise variations without destroying the basic structure of the pattern" (Garfias and Cadar 1996:109). Musical Example 4 provides one basic interlocking agong pattern:

Musical Example 4: Basic Agong Pattern (Garfias and Cadar 1996:109)



Agong accompaniment is indeed a mode of courtship, and unity between the two players of interlocking parts becomes all the more essential when communicating a single romantic message.⁹ The musical origin of the third piece, *Kasulampid*, is attributed to a myth in which two rivals for the same kulintang musician took their places at the high and low agong. Unfortunately the situation escalated from musical competition to a heated argument that had to be split up by the elders. A breakdown of the musical relationship occurred when they attempted to outdo each other, resulting in an over-zealous proportion of densified rhythms. The kulintang player mocked the men by creating a melody that parodies their dueling agong (Cadar 2000b). In my analysis I focus upon rhythmic interaction between

⁹ Cadar provided one verbal interjection that skilled agong players may reference through a rhythmic pattern:

"KATATAN KATATAN! KATAN-DO KATATAN! SO R'K ON O MANGARAGA!" meaning "There it is! There it is! This one's for the (unmarried) ladies!" (Cadar 2000b)

the kulintang and the two agong. Starting from the basic agong pattern provided in Musical Example 4, three types of rhythmic elaborations are possible: to double any note, to syncopate straight eighth notes, or to extend a phrase by repetition of one of its segments (Musical Example 5, CD Tracks 4 and 5).

Musical Example 5: Excerpt from Kasulampid

doubled & syncopated syncopated doubled & extended

In *Kasulampid*, the kulintang melody incorporates all three types of rhythmic variation to ornament the basic rhythmic mode. Thus, the mythical kulintang player's repertory of improvised melodic/rhythmic phrases became codified as non-verbal commentary on the fighting suitors. By musically mocking those who disagree, the kulintang player brackets the behavior as meriting extended (and embellished) comment, thus assuming a patronizing stance toward her male suitors.¹⁰ Therefore, not only does the kulintang player claim a disproportionate amount of control over the ensemble's musical style and execution in the course of a performance, but she can also "announce" dramatic emotions, criticize, and even mock certain male individuals through musical improvisation by exploiting relationships of song text and melody to speak freely through non-verbal means. Through *Kanditagaonan* the woman expresses her longing lyrically, in *Kapribogar* she indexes her discontent, and in *Kasulampid* she improvises mockery.

During the time of Cadar's most intensive fieldwork (1960s-1970s), it appears that musical practice generally upheld the notion of Maranao kulintang as a female tradition. Men dominated the playing of agong and drum accompaniment, since it was assumed that they "demand some masculinity of endurance, and strength in order to be beautifully played" (Cadar 1975:54-55). Even so, a few particularly talented men did play the main melodic instrument in informal settings, despite the fact that they might be perceived "of feminine inclination (ibid.: 55)." In fact, over time, more and more men began to play the kulintang, and societal developments hinted at opportunities for the male player alluring enough to eclipse concern over his threatened masculinity.

¹⁰ The female harangue directed at an individual male through expressive forms (poetic, song, instrumental) is common in many Southeast Asian countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia. See Ong and Peletz (1995).

II. Kulintang and Male Modernity: The Rise of the Kulintang Celebrity and Guru

In the 1960s and 1970s life was changing rapidly for Muslim Filipinos. Continued military attacks in Mindanao by the Philippine National Army exacerbated the separatist struggle for a Muslim Autonomous Region independent from the Philippine national government. Attempts to unify the fourteen disparate ethnic groups in a Bangsa-Moro nation through Arab-style Islamic revivalism resulted in a variety of social changes, both orthodox and reactionary. The armed factions experienced rapid growth of male and female combat units,¹¹ while the educated elite increased diplomatic relations with Arab countries. Increasing numbers of Muslim Filipino males enrolled for higher education abroad, and those who could afford it made the *haj* (religious pilgrimage) to Mecca, while international scholars in turn visited the Philippines to teach the tenets of orthodox Islam (Siapno 1993). Increasing international opportunities for men opened many doors for travel outside Mindanao, to the Arab world, and eventually, to the United States.

By then, ethnomusicologists at UCLA and other American universities were discussing the merits of bimusicality - learning how to play the music that we study. Thus began ethnomusicology's fascination with Asian bronze gong ensembles, and the Southeast Asian musicians who play them. In a recent article, ethnomusicologist Mantle Hood enthusiastically proclaimed the years 1954-2000 the "Bronze Age of Ethnomusicology" (Hood 2000:365). The popularity of the Indonesian gamelan had piqued scholarly interest in the kulintang as well. In 1963 Filipino composer Jose Maceda graduated from the UCLA ethnomusicology program and returned to the Philippines to establish a program for comparative Asian music studies. Maceda began training students and conducting fieldwork all over the Philippines with an intense focus on Mindanao. In 1966 Maceda and Mantle Hood organized the first International Symposium on Asian Music, held in Manila. There, international composers and scholars were exposed to the sounds of kulintang for the first time by a young man named Amal Lemuntod.

Amal Lemuntod was the first Maguindanao male to rise to celebrity status as a kulintang musician. He had already earned local fame through informal competitions among young men, and was "discovered" by Maceda in 1966 (Maceda 1998:150). As a result, he was able to embark on international tours and record solo LPs (Maceda 1988). Also inspired by ethnomusicology's "Bronze Age," in 1966 Robert Garfias from the University of Washington embarked on a three-month field trip during which he filmed 16 millimeter sound-movie films of Mindanao musical traditions (Cadar 1980). He encountered another talented musician, Cadar himself, who was performing with the

¹¹ Siapno (1993) discusses the fascinating ambiguities that riddled the relationships among gender, Islamic tradition, and revolutionary practice during this time period.

young Darangen Cultural Troupe in the Maranao region. Shortly afterwards, Garfias imported a set of kulintang instruments and this talented young man to the University of Washington to teach kulintang to American university students. Eventually Cadar obtained a Ph.D. in ethnomusicology. Eight years later he was joined by fellow Darangen graduate Danongan Kalanduyan, who expanded the students' repertoire with his rich knowledge of Maguindanao musical traditions. In a 1998 interview with Henrietta Ele-Hofer, the matronly director of the Darangen Cultural Troupe, she told me how proud she felt that her former students are now successful teachers in the United States. She explained,

Usopay Cadar was one of the first original. So Usopay is a Maranao from this place, Danny Kalanduyan is Maguindanao of Cotabato, and I'm trying to train another one...Usin, my assistant now, who is a Tausug. Because I felt if I can send Maranao, Magindanao, Tausug to the United States, then the whole world will know about the three Muslim groups that they come from, you see? That's why I say, never mind, Darangen is not that popular. But I'm hundred percent I've done my job! (Ele-Hofer 1998)

As kulintang performance offered opportunities for travel, income, and possible fame, the business of male players was taken more seriously. No longer frivolous or just for play, considerable talent could carry one all over the Philippines and abroad. This paradox suggests that the sudden economic value given to kulintang mastery and the expansion of musical opportunities overshadowed kulintang's more domestic and feminine associations. Regional kulintang competitions flourished, especially in the Maguindanao region, where men competed for master status and prize money while women participated for exhibition only.¹² The Maguindanao musical style, characterized by denser rhythms, rapid tempos and crisp execution as heard in competitions and LP records, became more popular than the slower, more stately (feminine) Maranao style. The emergence of scholarly writings by Maceda sparked national interest in the music of insular Muslim regions, and Cadar and Kalanduyan gained respect as the only two experts of kulintang musical traditions in the United States.¹³ As highly coveted human resources, they would play a key role in the reification of Philippine folk performance among the post-1965 generation of Filipino immigrants and their

¹² This observation was offered by Mary Talusan, who conducted fieldwork on Maguindanao kulintang music in 1999-2000. Kalanduyan also documented many of these competitions on video in 1998.

¹³ In 1995 Kalanduyan received a National Heritage Award from the National Endowment for the Arts.

children. The import of kulintang instruments and teachers from the southern Philippines was initially a strategy meant to change the worldview of the American ethnomusicologist. Yet it seems that ethnomusicology's "Bronze Age" in turn transformed local and global perceptions of kulintang.

III. Transnational Social Movements and the Filipino-American Search for Roots

As kulintang began its journey outside the Muslim regions, social and political currents shaped the cultural climate into which the music was adapted. I focus on three particular movements that played a profound role in determining kulintang's new associations. These are the emergence of the Philippine Left, the Philippine Educational Theatre Association, and the Gabriela feminist movement. Undoubtedly, kulintang was also caught up in Marcos-era constructions of an official Philippine nationalism that appropriated indigenous culture through officially-endorsed folkloric dance and music troupes; the Bayanihan Dance Company was the most famous of these (Gaerlan 1999). However, here I bring attention to the performance activities of arts organizations with a progressive edge and a penchant for subaltern ideologies. In 1968 the Philippine Communist Party (CPP) was established along Maoist-Marxist-Leninist political lines. The party comprised a military arm, the National People's Army (NPA), and a massive network of non-governmental service organizations affiliated with its National Democratic Front. Anti-colonial, anti-capitalist, and revolutionary ideologies were also articulated through a growing repertoire of musical resistance from political prisoner songs to spirit-lifting militant songs, placing "great emphasis on using music to generate and maintain support, a crucial part of their arsenal" (Lockard 1996:167). Similarly, folk-rock songwriter Joey Ayala incorporated indigenous musical materials into songs, "dealing with deteriorating socioeconomic conditions on his home island of Mindanao and presenting militant images of exploitation, repression, and resistance" (ibid.:169).¹⁴ To militant songwriters, the modern masculinized form of kulintang offered an appealing rhythmic soundscape. Cadar writes, "the use of Philippine gong music to mark and celebrate the revolt [against Spanish conquistadors] is a poignant reminder to Filipinos and others that our independence is hard earned, and that our freedom was never handed back easily. The image of Filipino hands, defiantly lifted and gripping indigenous blades, is a paramount expression of longing for the quintessential aspects of an original identity untainted by successive foreign rule" (Cadar 1998). This image was doubly upheld by historical Muslim struggles against Spanish

¹⁴ During Joey Ayala's New York concert on his 1992 international tour, Youth for Philippine Action members comprised the volunteer concert staff, Potri Ranka Manis was a featured solo dancer, and afterwards band members joined Kinding Sindaw for a public kulintang music and dance workshop at a New York community college.

colonization as well as the contemporary Bangsa Moro movement against a common enemy – the Philippine government.

A second artistic genre borne out of this marriage of arts and social upheaval is the Theatre of Liberation model popularized internationally by figures such as Franz Boal and Bertold Brecht. Cecille Guidote Alvarez started the Philippine Educational Theater Association (PETA) in 1967 with the vision of a people's theater movement that bespeaks poetics of the oppressed. PETA facilitators enter communities and run theater workshops to help the people dramatize their own lives in social commentary plays. Afterwards those workshop participants are trained to recruit and run their own local theater troupes. By 1987 there were as many as 400 community theater groups all over the Philippines modeled upon PETA, including groups based in Mindanao that drew from Maranao and Maguindanao cultural themes (Van Erven 1997:92). Third, although it is not an artistic movement per se, the Gabriela Philippine feminist network was formed. Gabriela built up 105 women's organizations under its umbrella. Named after Gabriela Silang, a famous woman warrior from Philippine history who led revolts against Spanish rule, the movement's goal is to "support the Philippine struggle for genuine democracy and liberation" and to "advance the militant women's movement in the Philippines" (Gabnet Homepage 2001).

The concurrent rise and interaction of political, social, and cultural ideologies demanding indigenous inspiration followed the kulintang across the ocean and influenced Filipino-American artists equally devoted to Philippine and Filipino-American causes. Violent persecution of individuals under the Marcos dictatorship forced a number of Philippine Communist Party, Gabriela, and PETA members into exile in the United States in the 1980s. Cecille Guidote Alvarez and other PETA actors-in-exile established PETAL at the La Mama Experimental Theater Company in New York,¹⁵ and Gabriela members founded Gabnet for international solidarity and local community action. Philippine Communist Party members dispersed into a plethora of small political organizations. Eager to continue their grass-roots community organizing, progressives encountered Filipino-American youth who were engaged in a familiar discourse of decolonization and indigenization, or "the process of recognizing the master narratives that constructed colonial identity and replacing them with indigenous narratives" (Mendoza Strobel 1996:38). Moreover, their politico-cultural language also included racial themes, "the most recurrent...being that of a minority challenging

¹⁵ Usopay Cadar gave kulintang workshops to PETAL and collaborated on theatrical productions for many seasons, beginning in 1971 (Cadar 1996b:145).

an oppressive majority, and an 'unconquered' society confronting one with a deeply ingrained colonial mentality and westernised social values" (Siapno 1993:185).

Youth for Philippine Action (YPA) was one community group that formed in New York City in 1990. Founding member Steven De Castro explains the function of the organization from his perspective:

We Filipinos have to work on our identity together...the 16-year-olds, the drop-outs, and the Columbia graduates. We work it a lot by just hanging out. We share music, we share stories, we share books. It looks a little unorganized, but what's going on is a process of Filipinos learning to stick together in a white world, and putting out a strong message of resistance...A big part of our collective story is the fight against colonization, which means all those fucking Europeans coming into our turf, treating us as inferior, and trying to run our lives....But we've first got to stop thinking like the colonizer wants us to think...We've got to start doubting the bullshit that white America is trying to feed us in the schools and on TV. (De Castro 1994:198-199)

As one of those "16-year-olds," I was introduced to YPA at a social gathering in De Castro's home in 1992. Guests took turns at the microphone-less "open mic," a central spot on the living room floor from which one can express oneself through poetry, song, or dance. Later that evening a respected guest arrived, and all present scrambled to make room for and welcome this woman they called "the Princess." "The Princess" entered, wearing typical dressed-down New York street clothes, accented by spectacular beaded jewelry and a brightly-colored traditional *malong*. Accompanying her was her husband, with a burdensome cache of bronze instruments and baby daughter in tow. While she made her grand entrance, her husband hurriedly set up the *kulintang* instruments at the open-mic spot. They began their presentation, with the husband playing the *kulintang* to accompany his wife's Maranao dances. In between songs, she spoke to the crowd of youth about the oppressed Muslims of Mindanao, and their ancient culture that they have kept pure through centuries of colonization. She told her personal story as a 15-year-old freedom fighter in the Muslim insurgent armies, as a prisoner of war in Marcos' torture chambers, and as a nurse forced to work abroad in Saudi Arabia. The youth responded with great emotion and enthusiasm, vowing to advocate for the liberation of Filipino Muslims and all oppressed peoples by learning more about this music and dance that she offered. This remarkable woman was Potri Ranka Manis, accompanied by her husband Nur Nonilon Queano, a professor of Philippine studies and musician from Manila. That night was my first introduction to the *kulintang*, and the woman

alongside whom I would dedicate the next seven years of my life as a performer in her troupe named *Kinding Sindaw*.¹⁶ I offer this personal anecdote to hint at the experiential intensity of what has developed into a significant trend among Filipino-American community arts groups since the late 1980s.

First, I would like to distinguish between the types of artistic goals discussed here and the cultural activities of student-based Filipino organizations. Barbara S. Gaerlan (1999) articulates the web of post-colonial forces on Filipino-American student culture shows with cogent insight. She identifies the college Philippine Culture Night (PCN) as an arena for Orientalist appropriation of non-Christian indigenous cultures through highly folkloristic, stylized representations (Gaerlan 1999:252). She applies Edward Said's concept of Orientalism to the institutionalized performance style of heightened theatricality and stereotypes of "Islamic mysticism and Moro fierceness in battle" (ibid.:260). Whereas such student productions were modeled largely upon (well-documented) Bayanihan-style folkloric dances, alternative groups sought to present something more "genuine." A former *Kinding Sindaw* member recalls meetings at which "a lot of time was spent complaining about things...like if I had a really negative experience that had something to do with the fact that I'm Asian or a woman, it was an outlet for me to discuss that...if I saw something on the news or read an article that angered me, that was a place where I could bring it up. A lot of time was spent listening to lectures by the leader of the group about Philippine history, or experiences with other organizations and why they weren't as genuine as ours was" (Baun 2001). However, more often than not, the Filipino-American seeking self-discovery through Muslim cultures cannot claim any actual blood lineage to Maranao or other Moro peoples, nor can she draw upon firsthand experience from within those traditions. The multiethnic makeup of the Philippine islands makes pure Philippine roots too elusive a notion to be "found." Nevertheless, community arts groups from Seattle to Washington D.C. implored Cadar and Kalanduyan (given the honorific, "Grand Masters," and "Gurus" by some) to train their members. Many dramatic conflicts and debates arose during this time of flourishing organizations around issues such as authenticity and exploitation of kulintang for commercial means (See Cadar 1996a). My particular interest with regard to this Filipino-American phenomenon is: which representation of kulintang have its contemporary non-Muslim (Filipino, American, Filipino-American) practitioners embraced? How are these new interpretations influenced by transnational social flows? Finally, how have they misread, reinterpreted, or ignored kulintang's female aspects?

¹⁶ *Kinding Sindaw* is a Maranao term meaning "Dance of Light."

IV. Post-colonial Women Warriors: Four Female Artistic Directors in the United States

The rise of kulintang gurus and celebrities was not a male-specific phenomenon for long; soon afterwards female musicians, dancers, actresses, and directors in the Philippines and in the United States spearheaded successful artistic projects and academic programs involving kulintang. To give adequate attention to the achievements of these women would warrant elaborate descriptions outside the scope of this paper. But in order to contextualize these four case studies within a larger international phenomenon, I provide introductory summaries of the activities of a selection of female artists in the Philippines and the United States in Table 1 (see next page).

Despite the wide scope of kulintang's possible symbolic meanings, I posit one unifying ideological thread throughout interpretations of self-labeled subaltern artists. Kulintang music is imbued with a fundamental liberating power. Contemporary kulintang performance and the accompanying dances are ensconced in rhetoric of liberation, whether it frees one from sickness, colonial mentality, cultural homogenization, patriarchy, spiritual poverty, capitalism, or the Philippine government. In her study of a Maguindanao healing ritual performed with kulintang and a sword dance, Elena Joaquin Damaso explains, "the liberation theme is well-depicted...every single human being is an integral part of the community, the Ummah."¹⁷ All too obvious is the message of the sword-dancer's movements...The military expression follows the tradition of the warrior-gods but [is] a force applied towards the holistic liberation of the people" (Damaso 1982:8). The sheer physicality of striking bronze and skin with sticks, the distance-cutting gong tones, and the pulsating rhythms create a compelling sonic impact that has been described as primeval, life-affirming, spiritual, enchanting, victorious, "muscular" (Trimillos 1999), and "just badd azzz."¹⁸ One reviewer of the Oakland-based Kulintang Dance Theatre admits, "I could feel my eyes and ears opening up to breath and tone, a palpable gradation of sensations. The imposingly large agong is often described as Kulintang's heartbeat" (Shuman 2001). In this spirit, the Dallas-based artistic director Zonia Elvas Velasco insists, "one has to experience hearing the vibrations, to tremble with the sounds of the big gongs and drums, to wait in anticipation of the fortes and climaxes, to stand in awe of the agility and beautiful improvisations of the kulintang master, and to be moved...by the kulintang gongs!" (Velasco 1997).

¹⁷ The universal Islamic brotherhood.

¹⁸ From Eleanor Academia's biographical homepage. The full description of Academia's "musical toughness" presents her percussion section as "tight, hot, funky, rocky and just badd azzz."

Table 1: A Selection of Female Artists in the Philippines and United States

Persons in bold font are discussed at greater length in the body of this paper.

NAME	LOCATION	ORGANIZATIONS	SKILLS
Sindao Banisil Linda Banisil	Manila and Marawi City, Philippines	- Darangen Cultural Troupe - Earthsavers Dream Ensemble (Linda) - East School of Music - Philippine Women's University College of Music	Sisters raised as princesses in the Maranao region, trained in kulintang, kutyapi (lute), kubing (bamboo mouth harp), bayok epic chant, and dance. They are also famous stage actresses and university teachers.
Henrietta Ele-Hofer	Marawi City, Philippines	- Former Artistic Director of the Darangen Cultural Troupe at Mindanao State University	Of Magindanao/Maranao heritage, she teaches both Mindanao dances and kulintang
Cecille Guidote Alvarez	Manila, Philippines New York, NY	- Philippine Educational Theatre Arts (PETA) - PETAL of La Mama Experimental Theater Company (NYC) - Earthsavers Dream Ensemble	A famous screen, television, and stage actress, she is also the Artistic and Musical director of Earthsavers. She narrates and sings while playing the kulintang and other percussion instruments. She founded PETA in the Philippines and founded PETAL in NY while in exile.
Aga Mayo Butocan	Manila, Philippines	University of the Philippines at Diliman, Conservatory of Music, where she spearheaded the Kulintang program for the Asian Music Department	First female Magindanao Kulintang Master to teach in Manila, and a Tao Music solo recording artist. She developed kulintang notation for classroom instruction.
Fe Prudente Kristina Benitez	Manila, Philippines	- U.P., Diliman Conservatory of Music - Cultural Center of the Philippines	Ethnomusicology professors and kulintang ensemble directors
Lucrecia Kasilag	Manila, Philippines	- Cultural Center of the Philippines, Artistic Director - U.P. Diliman Conservatory of Music	Reknowned composer and music scholar who incorporates indigenous music into her compositions
Ligaya Fernando Amilbangsa	Manila, Philippines	Filipinas Foundation	Researched and wrote book about the Tausug (Sulu/Jolo) Pangalay dance and kulintang music
Grace Nono	Manila, Philippines	- Founder, Tao Music Productions - Famous solo recording artist	Popular singer/songwriter, Philippine traditional music researcher, record producer
Cynthia Ayala Alexander	Manila, Philippines	- Ethnic rock bands Hayp & Bagong Lumad	Kulintang player, percussionist, bassist, songwriter
Potri Ranka Manis	New York, NY	- Kinding Sindaw - PANATA Filipino Artists for Human Rights, Founder	Dances, music, martial arts (kuntao silat) and storytelling from Maranao, Maguindanao, Tausog, and Tiboli regions. "Maranao Princess", PETA-trained actress, nurse.
Jane Orendain	New York, NY	Former Darangen dancer from Marawi, Mindanao	Offers Mindanao dance workshops, community organizer
Linda Pichon	New York, NY	Sirong Ganding, Inc.	Produces Kulintang concerts and workshops
Susie Ibarra	New York, NY	Various free jazz ensembles	Emerging young free jazz drummer who incorporates kulintang into her work
Zonia Elvas Velasco	Dallas, TX	Filipino Folk Arts Theatre, Artistic and Executive Director	"Kulintang Master", vocalist, teacher of other indigenous instruments, Kali/Arnis/Eskrima martial arts master, community television producer
Eleanor Academia-Magda	Los Angeles, CA	- World Kulintang Institute Founder, Director - Magda Institute of Martial Arts	"Kulintang Master," rock songwriter, recording artist, community educator, martial arts expert
Alleluia Panis	San Francisco, CA	- Kulintang Arts, Founder/Director - Alleluia Panis Dance Theater	Choreographer, kulintang musician, women's community theater arts advocate, leads Philippine research trips
Lizae Reyes	San Francisco, CA Oakland, CA	- Mindanao Kulintang Ensemble - Kulintang Dance Theater, Co-Founder	Kulintang musician, dancer, teacher of childrens' programs
Pamela Costes	Seattle, Washington	University of Washington, Seattle, Department of Ethnomusicology	Graduate of UP Diliman Asian Music program, now a PhD student in Seattle teaching kulintang performance

Even when framed in naturalistic overtones, depictions of the kulintang sound still draw upon masculine vocabularies. This is corroborated in most writings about the kulintang musician which invariably use the default pronoun, "he" (with the exception of Cadar's work). Masculinity, coupled with aggressive physical intensity, creates a militant character generally attributed to percussion genres in European and American music traditions.¹⁹ It appears that even contemporary Filipino female artists draw upon this social worldview built upon spiritual and masculine ideals. The very first entry in Webster's Dictionary under the word "master" reads "a male teacher" (1968:1389). But what Velasco, Alleluia Panis, Potri Ranka Manis, and Eleanor Academia offer is a fascinating synthesis of the image of the "Kulintang Master" with the "Martial Arts Master" for a doubly potent declaration of feminine strength (see Figure 4 on next page). For instance, in addition to running extensive educational and cultural programs for youth and the wider Dallas community, Velasco teaches Kali Arnis martial arts. She boasts, "in 1994, at the World Eskrima Kali Arnis Federation World Tournaments, I earned the title of World Champion of the Women's Division" (Velasco 1997). Velasco is a multi-talented performer; in a single presentation she introduces the historical and cultural context of the music and dance, accompanies her dancers on the kulintang, and emerges from behind the instruments to join in the dancing or stick-fighting.

Alleluia Panis directs Kulintang Arts, a troupe based in San Francisco. She is highly involved in feminist organizations such as Working Women Theater Festival, Filipina-American Women's Network, and Gabriela. Panis "re-contextualizes dances, myths and rituals from far-away islands into visually compelling dances, infused with a sensuous delicacy and athleticism, that combine tribal arts, modern dance and text" (PoMo Homepage 2001). Two of her most recent productions in 2000 were The Warrior Project that aimed to "explore the myths, rituals and imagery of the warrior arts with warrior battling warrior in the dance of vital combat, heart-pounding rhythms, trance-state consciousness, [and] mesmerizing chants," and Gabriela, a "dance work [that] honors the woman warrior... in a compelling celebration of resistance and the power of the human spirit," (Eskrima Listerserve 2001). The press release for Gabriela reads:

¹⁹ In my 1996 fieldwork on female percussionists in New York City, two performers in the percussion musical STOMP! expressed feelings of power derived from playing "with the big boys" and being the "bad ass" who can keep the guys "in check" (Lipat 1996:4). Also, Trimillos (1999) likens kulintang to taiko, another Asian-American "muscle" music, and taiko drummer Maria Olivas describes a competitive dynamic among women for the "one spot to be the cool, tough female. You have to battle it out to be the Alpha-bitch" (Lipat 1996:5).

Figure 4: Press photos of Potri Ranka Manis, Zonia Elvas Velasco, and Eleanor Academia



Potri Ranka Manis photos from Kinding Sindaw website:
<<http://www.kindingsindaw.org>>

Potri Ranka Manis of Kinding Sindaw, NY

(left) Manis wearing Tausug Pangalay nails (photo by Corky Lee)

(right) Manis fighting two male dancers with Moro swords



Zonia Elvas Velasco photos from FFATI website
<<http://www.ffati.org>>

Zonia Elvas Velasco of the Filipino Folk Arts Theatre, Dallas TX

(left) Zonia Velasco

(right) Velasco (left) and dancers in Eskrima stick battle wearing Tiboli and Bilaan costumes



Eleanor Academia photos from back and front covers of her 1998 CD.

Eleanor Academia-Magda of World Kulintang Institute, Los Angeles CA

(left) Academia at the Whiskey A Go-Go, LA

(right) Cover of her 1998 CD, "Oracle of the Black Swan"

From Bruce Lee to the local police, from boxing to blade techniques to jungle warfare, the warrior arts of the Pilipino people have greatly influenced the modern world. The Pilipino fighting arts techniques were developed as survival mechanisms to be practiced by both men and women...The dance work honors the woman warrior embodied in the historical figure of Gabriela Silang. The work integrates the simplicity of ritualistic gestures and the vigorous physicality of warrior arts and dance, into a compelling celebration of resistance and the power of the human spirit (PoMo Homepage 2001).

The paragon Princess-Warrior figure, Potri Ranka Manis, was "trained since childhood in all the traditional dance, music, and martial art forms of her people" (Brecht Forum Homepage 2001). She was also trained in PETA theater techniques and performed in Maranao-inspired plays as a student in Davao City, Mindanao. Manis founded Kinding Sindaw in 1992 in order to "assert, reclaim, preserve and recreate the unconquered traditions of the Filipinos."²⁰ Using Maranao "dance as a weapon" (ETAN Homepage 2000), Manis re-writes traditional story endings with a feminist twist. For instance, at the end of "Rajah Mangandiri," the Filipino interpretation of the classic Indian Ramayana epic, Manis retells Potri Malaila's (Princess Sita) ultimate trial by fire: "She emerges from the pyre unscathed, indignant and empowered, wielding her knife against all those that doubt her" (Gupta 2001). On and off-stage she delivers speeches on indigenous rights, human rights, migrant labor, and her life story as a revolutionary in venues such as the United Nations, political rallies, and among marginalized communities such as at the Mohawk Native American Indian reservation.

Alleluia Panis and Potri Ranka Manis share similar approaches to Mindanao cultures. They both affiliate themselves directly with feminist groups and feminist ideologies, and they reinterpret Muslim Filipino history and folktales by highlighting militant female heroines. However, unlike the traditional Maranao female performer whose mode of resistance is implicit in the music, Panis and Manis maneuver the extra-musical elements of kulintang performance into explicitly empowered choreography. Since kulintang accompaniment is indispensable to their work, they fervently and poetically assert its importance, but most of the dramatic affect of their work emanates from the overall theatrical presentation.

²⁰ As a member of Kinding Sindaw for seven years, I attended weekly music and dance rehearsals as well as the mandatory training in *silat* (Indonesian) martial arts by an Indonesian Perisai Diri Pencat Silat master.

On the other hand, Eleanor Academia utilizes her solid percussion skills and knowledge of Maguindanao kulintang repertoire to mold her professional image. Academia, a former student of Cadar and Kalanduyan, founded the World Kulintang Institute in Reseda, California. The Institute is also the Magda Institute of Martial Arts where her husband teaches various Asian martial arts forms. A professional recording artist and composer, Academia incorporates kulintang pieces and dabakan rhythms into her rock songs. The result is a musical, muscular feminism that influences her performance style in both genres. The following excerpt from Academia's website avows her status as a "fascinating, sexy...truly modern girl of the next millennium" by drawing parallels to notable men:

She's been drawn to male comparisons with Robert Plant as a deep souled voiced singer; Sly Stone and Jimmy Page as combination musician, record producer, arranger and songwriter...Jacques Cousteau in her fascinating research on the rare Kulintang gongs; Jim Morrison for her poetic imagery. Oh, and she's a master percussionist. (Eleanor Academia Homepage 2001)

Furthermore, Academia's online biography highlights her teenage years as a struggling musician "watching her back in South Central Los Angeles" and "dodging bullets." This imagery of Academia as an urban soldier carries into descriptions of her kulintang playing as well. Academia, "world renown[ed] as a master drummer and percussionist on the centuries old 'Kulintang' gongs and 'Dabakan,' an organic, Asiatic village music tradition, shoots bullets of rhythms unheard of" (Eleanor Academia Homepage 2001).²¹ Her explicitly militant image is illustrated most colorfully in the CD cover art for her 1998 CD, *Oracle of the Black Swan*, depicting Academia as a cartoon super-hero rock star with rippling abdominal muscles and formidable calves bulging atop platform hiking boots (Figure 4). The kulintang-rock track, "Unimpressed," is a "dueling shootout guitar and gong fest" (CD Track 6). In "Unimpressed," following a piano introduction, the kulintang enters on a single, repeating tonic note reminiscent of the initial stabilizing strokes of the traditional *ka-anon* introduction. Suddenly, the kulintang and guitar begin playing rapid unison riffs, many times faster than the tempo indicated in the *ka-anon*. The kulintang strikes perfect fifths in a solid

²¹ Similarly, said of free jazz drummer Susie Ibarra's "Kulintang Medley," a fusion of kulintang and jazz, her "quick spinning Philippine gongs" is likened to a "squeezing out of sparks" (Downtown Music Gallery Online Noozletter #27, 2001). Ibarra is described as a "petite woman" and "explosive drummer" whose music is "strong and powerful, loud and fast" (Carnahan 1997).

4/4 pulse, mirroring the distorted power chords of the electric guitar.²² The kulintang solo in "Unimpressed" is a version of *Binalig*, a Maguindanao kulintang genre most often played to highlight one's speed and virtuosity in competition. In selecting *Binalig* for her composition, Academia inserts herself symbolically into the male competitive ring, where females traditionally play for exhibition only. In essence, all four women effectively transform, and possibly ignore, kulintang's traditional female aspects in favor of a militant feminist modernity, ideological armor shaped to protect their artistic authority.

V. Criticisms and Discussion

I present a few additional areas of contention concerning kulintang musical practice today in order to provoke further discussion, and hopefully resolution of these issues. These are sacrilization of the kulintang, criteria for musical mastery, political evangelization, and cultural ownership. Since it is rare to encounter Muslim Filipino immigrants in the United States, in general, most performers of Muslim Mindanao cultures are not of those traditions. Lacking experiential knowledge of kulintang's various sociocultural contexts, they must engage their creative imaginations on stage. Enhanced by technical amplification and legitimizing program booklets, kulintang can be essentialized, de-socialized, and packaged as high art. It is rendered esoteric, and sanctified almost to excess. Unfortunately, such zealous sacrilization of the gongs can have alienating effects. One former Kinding Sindaw member said that she respected the kulintang so much that she felt too intimidated to approach the instrument or to learn the music. She noted, "I felt like I was walking on egg shells all the time. I wasn't sure if it was because of the people teaching it or whether it was really in the culture where it was revered...How am I supposed to learn this when any mistake I make is going to be disrespectful or make me not worthy?" (Baun 2001).

This alienating distance from the kulintang is reinforced by the fact that it is transmitted orally. Kalanduyan "absorbed" kulintang music from his "cultural environment," and recalls, "I didn't need a tutor; it just automatically came into my head, day and night" (ACTA Homepage 2001). On the other hand, Hawaii-born Academia's musical training honed her for a career in rock and popular music (*Heritage*, 1989). For a non-native, developing one's kulintang repertoire requires a long period of one-on-one study with a "Kulintang Master." Yet because they are rare

²² The power chord is "produced by playing the musical interval of a perfect fourth or fifth on a heavily amplified and distorted electric guitar" (Walser 1993:2). Walser emphasizes the power chord as the fundamental musical articulation of power and masculinity in heavy metal and rock music.

in the United States, community cultural leaders have had to reconsider the definition of the title "Master." Since 1999, both Kalanduyan and Academia have been awarded Master grants from the Alliance for California Traditional Arts to train qualified apprentices. The awarding of such grants to both a Maguindanao and a Filipina-American under the same auspices poses an interesting challenge to conceptualizations of traditional arts in the United States. Out of necessity, the prerequisite for musical mastery has extended beyond ethnolinguistic and enculturated heritage to consider evidence of dedicated research and high musical fluency in kulintang repertoire, albeit as a second language. Whether the "traditional" masters endorse non-traditional title claimers is a highly sensitive topic, with situationally determined outcomes. In a bold 1996 article, Cadar offers frank opinions about certain cultural groups and directors. Concerning Alleluia Panis, he concludes:

Ms. Alleluia Panis, leader of the Kulintang Arts, is a dance choreographer hopelessly incapable of either singing Magindanaon songs or playing any kulintang/kolintang instrument. Notwithstanding, she advertises herself as somebody who gives workshops and lessons on Filipino kulintang/kolintang music. Worse yet, she wrote and published via her organization a booklet purporting to explain the legends and origin of the Filipino gong music. Checked against all the scholarly works on Philippine gong music...no other conclusions can be drawn but that Ms. Panis' book is a product of her fertile imagination instead of scholarly research. (Cadar 1996a:141)

Clearly, kulintang performance in the United States is rife with ideological, artistic, and personal tensions. Another dispute surrounds the use of cultural performance for politicization and recruitment. After the People Power Revolution overthrew the Marcos dictatorship in 1986, there was a widespread "crisis of the left" during which "Anti-DPA (deep penetration agents) Campaigns...launched by the CPP leadership to counter government agents in its ranks...led to the execution of at least 700 cadres and NPA fighters" (San Juan 1994:103-104). What was a violent political split in the Philippine leftist movement was manifested in organizational fissures in the United States. No longer just artistically competitive, politically-minded cultural groups diverged along political lines, and satellite groups of the Philippine Communist Party faced the task of rebuilding the ranks. Kulintang music and dance offered a means both of attracting new members and of couching culture in political rhetoric. Manis is particularly effective at this, for her public charisma and intensity elicit strong audience response. For instance, after a joint performance with Velasco, Manis, and the author in Dallas, a newspaper reporter notes:

After the intermission, the geniality gave way to a new mood. Princess Potri Ranka Manis of the Maging Sultanate, Lanao, Mindanao, took charge... "We are part of a sovereign royalty," she said, eyes flashing fire, "that was taken away in the 16th century." The memory was still bitter to her. So was the memory of the Treaty of Paris, which she informed us was signed on Dec. 10, 1898, giving control of the Philippines to the U.S. "Ignominy," she spat out. Her anger enlivened the second half, which consisted of dances from the Mindanao mountains and from the royal court of the Sulu Seas. The mountain dances escaped Spanish influence, displaying instead the much older influence of India and Islam... The princess moved with a solemn suavity, eyes cast down, body low to the ground. "Let us assert and preserve and reclaim our culture," she exhorted the audience... The audience complied, and shrieks bit the air. (Putnam 1998)

Besides performing in arts venues, Manis' group Kinding Sindaw performs quite often at leftist political gatherings, progressive non-profit fundraisers, and even street demonstrations, enhancing "the chanting with the beat of their gongs" (Philippine Forum Homepage 2001). However, it is important to note that not all performers necessarily adhere to the same political perspective. A former Kinding Sindaw dancer comments:

I don't think that the politics that we were supposedly showing solidarity for were inherently connected with the culture... In retrospect, I don't think that it was appropriate that the politics of the leadership and not the culture of the dances and music were represented. If you were talking about indigenous peoples, then yes, but performances like at the Revolution Bookstore, I don't know if that's appropriate. (Baun 2001)

Filipino Muslim cultural traditions offer potent modes of expression to the root-seeking Filipino-Americans, feminist artists, and decolonizationists, but can be misleading when used intentionally to mask political agendas.

Similarly, in his critical analysis of Filipino American student culture shows, Theodore Gonzalvez (1997) is wary of personal politics and cultural ownership. He likens the culture show production process to a constricting straitjacket. He asserts that cultural performances "raise questions about how culture, politics, and history are related for this young immigrant community – how the stories we tell about ourselves are often managed, disciplined, monopolized, hoarded, dictated, maybe even railroaded" (Gonzalvez 1997:166). I posit that since 1997 concepts of cultural ownership have changed somewhat due to internet technology. The speed and relative accessibility of electronic media facilitates the exchange of ideas among artists and cultural organizers in the United States and the

Philippines. Thus, local imaginations are no longer geographically confined, allowing shared cultural symbols to transform in virtual space. Kulintang winds its way into discussions on martial arts and music listserves, sites for downloading mp3s, community organization websites, and arts calendars. Yet even though its liberating discourse and liberating sound travel via text and sound files, the physical gongs still remain relatively inaccessible. In addition, virtual reality is gendered space – the internet has caused a “crisis of masculinity” wherein “the practices of cyberspace have often been inflected with fantasies of power and control” (Pile and Thrift 1995:23). Thus, public imageries constructed by female artists in press releases, brochures, and websites are critical sites for negotiation of power and gender dynamics.

In conclusion, despite criticisms that kulintang performance is caught up in personal and political agendas, filtered through essentializing distillations, and hoarded as powerful cultural capital, Leny Mendoza Strobel offers a more positive affirmation of Philippine cultural exploration as a healing psychological mechanism for a displaced diaspora. She asserts:

For now we need to tell our stories. Dig up memories. Sing old songs in an old tongue. Write poetry in praise of *Bathala*.²³ Heal in the name of our *babaylans*.²⁴ Dance to the rhythm of the *kulintang* gongs. Nostalgic perhaps. Romantic perhaps. Commodification and misappropriation perhaps. But let us be. The gods must be happy that we are making our way home, at last. In a place far removed from the homeland perhaps. But it is as close as we can get to Home. (Strobel 2001:19)

It is valid to assume that the platform for Filipina feminist arts will thrive for years to come. In the Philippines, PETA has already placed bids to host two international Festivals of Asian Women Plays in 2003 and 2006 (Asian Women's Theatre Homepage 2001). The Gabriela feminist network has growing constituencies outside the Philippines, especially on American college campuses. Ethnomusicology graduate students such as Mary Talusan (UCLA) and Pamela Costes (University of Washington) are conducting concurrent research on gender and music of Muslim cultures in the United States and the Philippines. In my recent kulintang lessons with Cadar, he showed interest in reviving lesser-known Maranao pieces in the slower, feminine style, as his mother had played them. But it

²³ A pre-colonial Philippine deity.

²⁴ Powerful priestesses and women warriors in pre-modern Philippine history.

is clear that more fieldwork needs to be done in Mindanao and among Muslim Filipino diasporic communities in order to understand more deeply the musical activities and experiences of Muslim female musicians today. Although Cadar considers the journey of kulintang music in America a "dissonant" saga with moments of "dissolutionment," he reiterates a sense of hope that "in the end, especially in the advent of ethnomusicology, one or more of those seeds will sprout, get nourished, and bear fruit, if not flourish" (Cadar 1996a:148).

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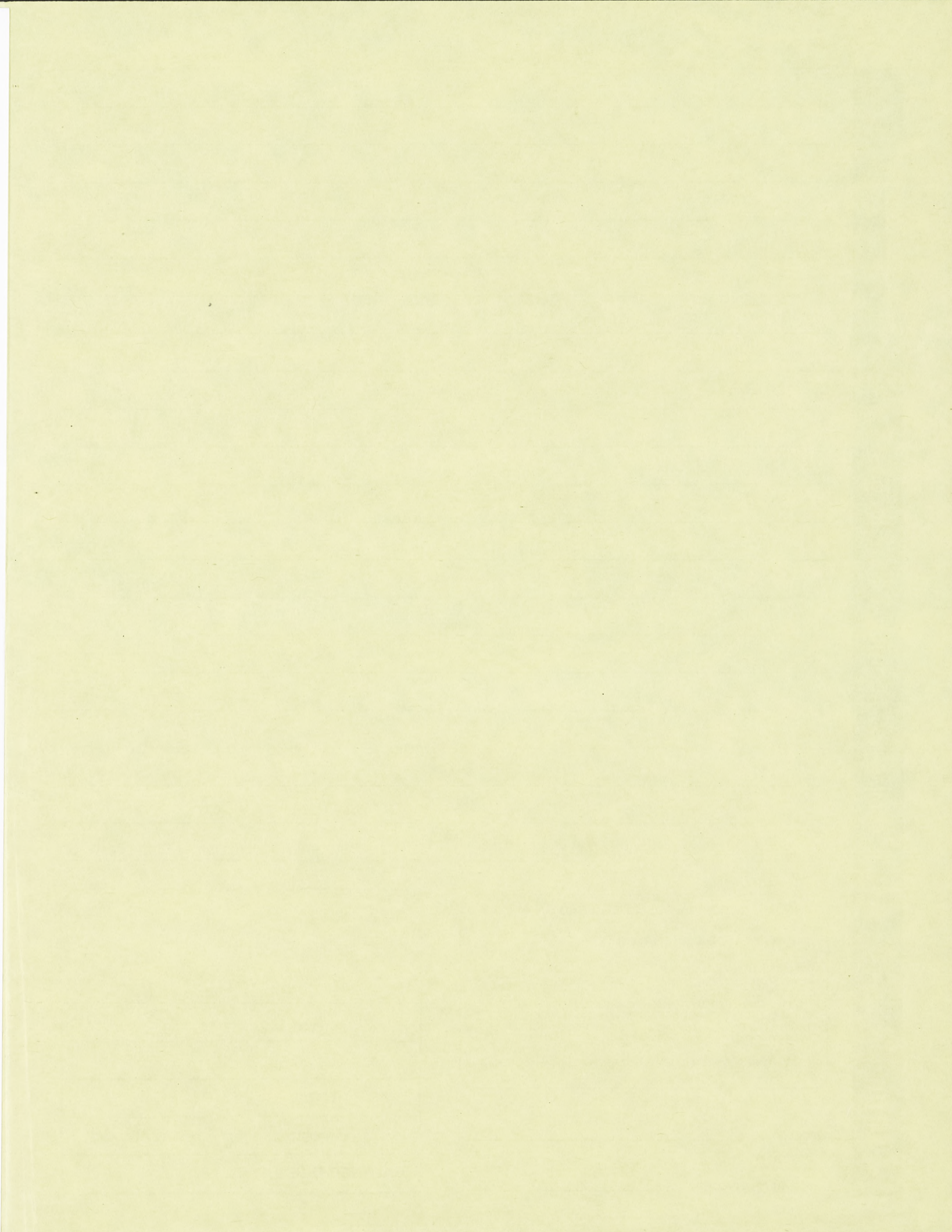
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